

RECORD OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON **THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016** AT 6:00 PM IN THE JAMES F. WALSH SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROOM, 5TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL. STATUTORY NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK.

School Committee Members Present: Ms. Ditkoff (Chairman), Mr. Pollak (Vice Chairman), Mr. Chang, Ms. Charlupski, Mr. Glover, Dr. Jackson, Ms. Scotto, Ms. Stone, and Ms. Stram. Also present: Dr. Connelly, Dr. Fischer-Mueller, Dr. Shmukler, Ms. Dunn, Mr. Lummis, Mr. Kahn, and Ms. Coyne.

Others Present: Deb Holman and Hal Mason.

1. REORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

a. Certification of Oath of Office

Dr. Connelly took the gavel and called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He read the letter from the Town Clerk certifying that Helen Charlupski, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and David Pollak were elected for three-year terms and that they took their oaths, as described in Attachment A. He extended congratulations to each of them.

b. Nomination/Vote by Roll Call for Chairman

Dr. Connelly explained that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the School Committee are to be elected for a one-year term by a majority of those members present, and that unless a vote is taken to the contrary, no member may serve as Chairman for more than two consecutive one-year terms. He asked if there were any nominations for School Committee Chairman. Dr. Jackson nominated Ms. Ditkoff, and this was seconded by Ms. Stram.

Ms. Stone then made the following statement:

I support the nomination of Susan Wolf Ditkoff for Chairman of the committee, but we need first to suspend Article 3 of Section B of our Policy Manual, which states that "No member of the School Committee may serve as Chair for more than two consecutive one-year terms."

Before making that motion, I think it's important to point out that the School Committee has taken the same action at a similar junction in the past, specifically when we were bringing on a new Superintendent at the same time that an experienced Chair was finishing their second year in that position.

That was the case just before I joined the School Committee when Bill Lupini was hired, and Marcia Heist agreed to serve a third year as chair in order to provide the smoothest transition for the Superintendent and for the School Committee.

I'm pretty sure I speak for every member of this Committee when I say how very grateful I am that Susan is willing to continue in this role as we bring on Andrew Bott as our Superintendent.

ACTION 16-25

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Dr. Jackson,, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to temporarily suspend Section B, Article 3 of the Public Schools of Brookline Policy Manual to allow for a vote on the election of Susan Wolf Ditkoff to serve a third year as Chair of the School Committee. The suspension of the policy will be in place no longer than one year from now, or until the next reorganization meeting of the School Committee, whichever period is shorter.

Dr. Connelly asked if there were any additional nominations; hearing none, he asked for a vote to close the nominations.

ACTION 16-26

On a motion of Dr. Jackson and seconded by Ms. Stram, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to close the nominations for School Committee Chairman.

Dr. Connelly then asked Ms. Coyne to poll the Committee for their vote of Chairman.

ACTION 16-27

On a motion of Dr. Jackson and seconded by Ms. Stram, the School Committee, by roll call vote, VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to appoint Ms. Ditkoff as Chairman of the Brookline School Committee.

c. Nomination/Vote by Roll Call for Vice Chairman

Dr. Connelly asked if there were any nominations for School Committee Vice Chairman. Ms. Scotto nominated Mr. Pollak and this was seconded by Mr. Chang. Ms. Ditkoff asked if there were any additional nominations; hearing none, she asked for a vote to close the nominations.

ACTION 16-28

On a motion of Ms. Scotto and seconded by Mr. Chang, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to close the nominations for School Committee Vice Chairman.

Ms. Ditkoff then asked Ms. Coyne to poll the Committee for their vote of Vice Chairman.

ACTION 16-29

On a motion of Ms. Scotto and seconded by Mr. Chang, the School Committee, by roll call vote, VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to appoint Mr. Pollak as Vice Chairman of the Brookline School Committee.

d. Vote to Reappoint Secretary

Ms. Stone nominated Ms. Coyne to continue as Secretary of the Brookline School Committee and Ms. Scotto seconded the motion.

ACTION 16-30

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to close the nominations for Secretary of the Brookline School Committee.

ACTION 16-31

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to appoint Ms. Coyne to continue as Secretary of the Brookline School Committee.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

a. Calendar

Ms. Ditkoff noted upcoming events on the calendar.

b. Consent Agenda

ACTION 16-32

On a motion of Mr. Chang and seconded by Ms. Stone, the School Committee VOTED (Mr. Glover abstained because he was not at the April 28, 2016 meeting) to approve the item included in the Consent Agenda.

- i. Past Record: April 28, 2016 School Committee Meeting

3. SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

a. Finance

Ms. Stram reported that the next meeting of the Finance Subcommittee will take place on May 16, 2016. The agenda will include Student Activities Accounts and the 2016-2017 schedule for reviewing financial policies.

b. Capital Improvements

Mr. Pollak reported that the Devotion School Building Committee met on May 4, 2016 and voted to approve the resubmission to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and to authorize the Owner's Project Manager to submit the 60% Construction Documents Submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The next meeting of the Capital Improvements Subcommittee will take place on May 13, 2016.

c. Curriculum

Ms. Charlupski reported that the Curriculum Subcommittee met earlier this evening to review the School Improvement Plan for the Brookline High School. The Subcommittee will be meeting on May 19, 2016 to review the School Improvement Plans for the Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP) and the Heath School and on May 25, 2016 for a status report on curriculum initiatives.

d. Government Relations

Ms. Stone had nothing to report at this time.

e. Policy Review

Dr. Jackson reported that the next meeting of the Policy Review Subcommittee will take place on May 12, 2016. The agenda will include review of three financial policies (Student Fees, Fines and Charges; Financial Assistance; and Meal Charges) and the Public Schools of Brookline Anti-Bullying, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies.

f. Additional Liaisons and Updates

There was nothing to report at this time.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Katherine and Matthew Stewart, Runkle School parents, asked the School Committee to address the following questions:

1. Can you confirm who on the School Committee works for or has done any work on behalf of the philanthropy consulting group, The Bridgespan Group?
2. How much total revenue has The Bridgespan Group taken in from clients promoting Education Reform before your tenures and during your tenures on the School Committee?
3. What kind of Education Reform are those clients promoting? Specifically, is it of the high-stakes testing, data-driven variety that appears to be at issue in the dispute with the Brookline Educators Union?
4. What can you say to Brookline voters and parents to assure us that you are representing our interests, and not the interests of The Bridgespan Group in generating revenues from clients with a particular agenda?

Ms. Ditkoff noted that the School Committee's policy is to listen very closely, but not to respond during Public Comment. She suggested that Ms. Stewart and Mr. Stewart email their questions directly to the School Committee.

Margo Stanton, Baker School 8th grade student, spoke in support of the teachers and a fair contract. She stated that the Brookline teachers have worked without a contract, but unlike teachers in other jurisdictions, have not gone out on strike. The teachers care about the students' well-being, look out for them, and push them to achieve. Ms. Stanton spoke in support of establishing a Workload Oversight Committee and encouraged the School Committee to agree to a fair and equitable contract.

Maureen (did not provide her last name) expressed surprise that there is no dialogue during Public Comment.

5. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Connelly provided the following report:

1. Reorganization of School Committee – May 5, 2016

Reminder: Our next meeting on May 5th, will be the annual School Committee reorganization meeting. The School Committee will vote to appoint the Chairman and

Vice Chairman and to reappoint the Executive Secretary. Also, all newly elected or re-elected Committee members need to take the Oath of Office prior to the May 5th School Committee meeting.

2. New Administrative Staff

*I am pleased to announce a Central Office position funded from the FY16 School Budget has now been filled. Lesley Ryan Miller has been offered the position of **Senior Director for Teaching and Learning**. It was our goal to have this position filled and in place prior to July 1 so that the Senior Director could assist with the transition of Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. It is anticipated Lesley will be able to begin sometime during the month of June. Dr. Fischer-Mueller and her interview team interviewed nine candidates for this position. Lesley Ryan Miller worked for many years as a primary level teacher for the Boston Public Schools (BPS). She has also planned and facilitated professional development and mentor support services for new teachers while working for the BPS Office of Professional Development. From 2009 – 2013, she served as Director of Teacher Development and Advancement while working for BPS Office of Educator Effectiveness, and for the past three years has held the title of Director of School Support. Dr. Fischer-Mueller indicates her references were stellar with people describing Lesley as collaborative, invaluable and very effective in helping educators grow.*

3. 2016 MCAS Math Testing to begin the week of May 9th – Clarification letter to parents

During the April administration of the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of this year's MCAS testing, a number of families inquired about the possibility of "opting out" of the MCAS testing and what, if any, consequences there would be for opting-out for their child or their school. I plan to send the attached informational letter to all Public Schools of Brookline families in advance of next week's math component of the 2016 MCAS testing. The letter explains to parents there is no "opt-out" provision and what the consequences are to a school and school district if even a small number of students chose not to participate in this mandated state-wide assessment program. I have "Frequently Asked Questions" attached to the parent letter in an attempt to help parents fully understand the ramifications of not participating in the MCAS or PARCC assessment programs.

4. Traffic Supervisors for Lower Devotion at 30 Webster Street

Attached you will find a letter I have submitted to Tony Guigli, Project Manager of the Devotion School construction project. This letter requests consideration for the Devotion School Building Project being responsible for the cost of two additional traffic supervisors to be assigned to the Lower Devotion School during their two years at 30 Webster Street. Currently, Devotion School has two traffic supervisors assigned to their Harvard Street location. As a result of the temporary shift to the Coolidge Corner location on Webster Street, it is felt it is necessary to add two additional traffic supervisor locations to ensure the safety of the K – 4 students that walk to and from school each day. The Devotion Project will fund the cost of transporting the Grade 5 – 8

Devotion students to the Old Lincoln School and I feel the \$16,000 per year for two additional traffic supervisors for the Lower School should also be included in the Devotion School Project Budget.

5. Administrative Searches – Update

Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Our Search Committee completed a thorough review of the 47 applications received and identified eight candidates for initial interviews. The Search Committee began interviewing candidates on Friday, April 29th; and will continue interviews on Thursday, May 5th; Tuesday, May 10th and Wednesday, May 11th. It is our intent to have finalists identified by May 11th so that second round interviews can be conducted during the weeks of May 17th and May 23rd.

Deputy Superintendent for Student Services

We have now formed the Search Committee and plan to begin the review of applications during the week of May 9th following the application deadline of Friday, May 6th.

Lincoln School Principal

The Lincoln School Principal Search Committee viewed 47 applications and identified eight candidates to be interviewed. On Monday, May 2nd the Lincoln Search Committee finished interviewing candidates and were able to recommend finalists to receive second round interviews by Senior Staff during the week of May 9th.

6. 16-17 Kindergarten Enrollment Update

Please see the attached breakdown of anticipated enrollments for the Class of 2029 through May 3, 2016. Per our established timeline, we plan to send out the first round acceptances for the Staff Materials Fee Program on May 16th.

7. Update on Public Meetings and Outreach Related to Building Projects

We have scheduled four public meetings between now and June 30th to update parents, guardians, and community members about the three building projects that are underway – Devotion School, 9th Elementary School, and Brookline High School.

The scheduled meetings are:

May 18th – Update on 9th Elementary School Site Selection, Timeline and Process

June 7th – Joint Board of Selectmen/School Committee Meeting on 9th Elementary School.

June 8th – Devotion School Building Project Update

June 13th – Brookline High School

We will organize outreach and communications to make sure these meetings are well publicized. Through district and school emails, websites, and social media we will reach out to parents, guardians, PTOs, Town Meeting Members, and the general public. As appropriate we'd like to work with School Committee members to help with outreach particularly with Town Meeting Members. We will also refresh both the school district

website as well as the Town 9th School webpage so they have up-to-date information about these building projects, and community members can easily get the information they need when they want it.

Mr. Lummis provided additional information on the 9th School Community Meeting (May 8, 2016, 7:00 PM, Pierce School Auditorium). The agenda will include: Impact of Ongoing Growth on K-8 Elementary Schools; Current Timeline for Site Selection and Construction of 9th Elementary School; Update on Site Studies for Site Selection; Update on Village School Site Considerations; and Questions and Answers.

6. SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTIONS

a. School Choice Non-Participation (Proposed Vote)

Ms. Ditkoff explained that the School Choice law contained in the Education Reform Act of 1993 presumes that each School Committee will admit non-resident students under the School Choice Program, unless there is a vote to the contrary taken by June 1 of each year, following a hearing on the issue. She further explained that the Brookline School Committee combined the hearing for this issue with the Public Hearing on the FY 2017 Budget, held on March 17, 2016. Ms. Ditkoff explained that the historical position of the School Committee has been that the way we participate in choice is through participation in the METCO program. The School Choice reimbursement rate is substantially less than the cost of educating one of our students.

ACTION 16-33

On a motion of Ms. Ditkoff and seconded by Ms. Stone, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY not to participate in the School Choice Program for the 2016-2017 School Year.

Ms. Ditkoff noted that she will send a letter informing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of this vote. [The letter, subsequently sent, can be found as Attachment B.]

b. Approval of the EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement as amended by the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors (Proposed Vote)

Ms. Charlupski stated that on April 28, 2016, the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors approved an amendment to the Articles of Agreement dated May 19, 2015 (Attachment C). The amendment is proposed as a result of the Wellesley Public Schools withdrawal from EDCO on June 30, 2016, and includes a change in the notification date for withdrawal from December 30th to July 1st of the prior year.

Ms. Stone asked when the School Committee will have a full and robust conversation about whether we should continue participation with EDCO. She is uncomfortable changing the notice requirement to a full year without having had this conversation. EDCO does a lot of good things, but she is not certain the services provided to Brookline are worth the cost. She intends to abstain from this vote. Ms. Charlupski noted several EDCO programs, including Job-Alike peer groups for

administrators, School Committee Orientations, professional development opportunities, and special education programs. Dr. Shmukler stated that EDCO offers 45-day placements at a reduced cost for members. Ms. Charlupski suggested that we wait until after Mr. Bott has started to have a full discussion on future participation. Dr. Fischer-Mueller noted that the number of teachers taking advantage of EDCO professional development opportunities increased in 2014-2015, which was after EDCO moved to their new location. Some of our teachers live closer to Bedford than to Brookline. Mr. Glover stated that he does not support amending the notification requirement. Ms. Charlupski and Dr. Connelly stated that EDCO would like to change the date to facilitate budget development and planning for the upcoming year. Dr. Connelly suggested inviting the Executive Director and Assistant Director to an upcoming School Committee meeting. Ms. Charlupski noted that the EDCO Board hired a consultant to investigate possible mergers. The consultant will report back to the Board in June.

ACTION 16-34

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Mr. Pollak, the School Committee VOTED, with 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Glover), and 1 abstention (Ms. Stone) to approve the EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement, dated May 19, 2015, as amended by a vote of the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors on April 28, 2016.

7. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF CURRENT ISSUES

a. Brookline High School (BHS) Competency Determination Report for the Class of 2016 and the Class of 2017

Dr. Connelly introduced BHS Headmaster Deb Holman and BHS Assistant Headmaster Hal Mason to present the BHS Competency Determination Report for the Class of 2016 and the Class of 2017 (Attachment D). Mr. Mason presented summary reports for English Language Arts (ELA), Math MCAS and Science MCAS scores from 2012 to 2015. The overall results are very good, but there are areas of concern when the scores are disaggregated by subgroup.

Mr. Mason reviewed the data for MCAS failures on first testing, the results of the November 2015 and March 2016 ELA and Math retests, and the results of the February 2016 Biology retest. Appeals have been filed for two seniors. There are currently eleven students who are considered to be class of 2016 who are in out-of-district placements. Of these eleven, five graduated with competency in 2015; three will be graduating in June; one passed all MCAS and is anticipated to graduate in August 2016; and two will remain in out-of-district placements beyond 2016 (neither student has met the MCAS requirement for graduation). Tutoring for the November 2015 MCAS Retest began in October 2015. Students in 11th and 12th grade needing to pass the MCAS exams were encouraged to attend tutoring sessions, which were scheduled during the students' free blocks. Following the November MCAS Retest, tutoring sessions continued for those students needing to pass the March MCAS retest. Biology MCAS tutoring was offered for students needing to pass the February Biology test.

Discussion focused on the disparity between MCAS physics scores for the African American Subgroup and other Subgroups. Mr. Mason stated that this is a major concern for the administration and that they have been working with Curriculum Coordinator Ed Wiser to try to address the gap. He noted that the small number of students and that a large number of the students in the Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing categories also have a disability.

Ms. Holman described some of the initiatives at the high school to support students:

Science Department – Consistently strong co-teaching teams at standard level; consistent inclusion in department learning of math teachers in Winthrop House, Alternative Choice in Education (ACE), and ExCEL; Science Content Reading Initiative teachers (21st Century Fund program) using department time to teach colleagues methods of decoding, making meaning, and better comprehension of science text in both text book, science reading, and MCAS open response; department time where 9th grade physics teachers look at their MCAS data (where strong, where weak) and share strong lessons; 9th grade physics team in the first year of using their own “re-test” and “post-test” given in September and May; continue to work with 9th grade science teachers and the coordinator on the right amount and type of teaching physics concepts across all K-8 schools (Some sense of being perplexed about the plateau of scores. Teachers have looked at their instruction scores and will continue to do so; we know that students who have some exposure to physics instruction in 8th grade do better on MCAS. If our goal is higher performance on 9th grade Physics MCAS, then we will continue to work with 8th grade teachers/coordinator on teaching the right amount of physics in 8th grade.); common assessments by grade; teachers using collaboration time and squeezing in other time to meet and talk instruction; working with Assistant Headmaster and Curriculum Coordinators to identify common planning blocks for all departments.

Math Department – Consistently strong co-teaching teams at standard level; consistent inclusion in department learning of math teachers in Winthrop House, ACE, and ExCEL; consistent focus on time to establish relationships with students who may not be as confident; Josh Paris and Melanee Alexander have co-facilitated exercises on recognizing bias in teaching; Ms. Alexander, Mr. Paris and teachers in the Calculus Project meet to discuss specific student challenges and effective teaching; are looking at how to make more effective use of after school Calculus Project tutoring and increase attendance; common assessments by grade; teachers using collaboration time and squeezing in other time to meet and talk instruction.

Mr. Glover requested a breakdown of BHS MCAS results by which elementary school students attended. Dr. Fischer-Mueller will provide this information in a way that does not identify certain students. She noted that our K-8 Science Learning Expectations align with the new standards, which include very little physics. We could decide to embed more physics, but this would be going against our K-8 Learning Expectations. We know that students taught physics in 8th grade do better on the MCAS physics exam. We need to figure out why our African American students are performing at a lower level on the physics MCAS exam. Ms. Holman stated that the administration would like to

push some of the work Mr. Paris and Ms. Alexander are doing in recognizing bias in teaching into the science program. The administration has thought about expanding the Calculus Project, which starts in the middle school grades, to physics. School Committee members commented that pushing back the physics curriculum to middle school won't necessarily solve the disparity so it may not make sense to change the curriculum; this is representative of a more global problem; would be helpful to look at whether students fall into more than one subgroup, in particular, the intersection of race and disability. Ms. Holman discussed how the administration uses data to determine whether certain instructional methods are more effective. When a method works well, it is shared with other teachers, e.g., project based lessons.

Dr. Connelly stated that the Update on Response Actions and Ongoing Efforts to Address Issues of Race and Diversity at Brookline High School has been postponed, as the administration is still gathering information. Ms. Ditkoff reported on last night's *World Café: A Discussion of Race in Brookline*, which was part of the *What's the Big Idea Forum series on Race and Community* sponsored by the BHS 21st Century and PTO in partnership with Brookline METCO, Brookline Interactive Group, and Steps to Success. The World Café is a round table discussion format in which difficult and uncomfortable questions can be raised in a context carefully facilitated to ensure that everyone is heard, everyone listens, and that no one makes individual attacks. Students, teachers, community members, school officials, and members of town departments and government were invited to come together to identify issues of race in town that require our attention and how we might best address them. Ms. Ditkoff noted that the November 8, 2016 Teacher Professional Development Day will be devoted to issues of racial awareness and sensitivity. This date, which coincides with the national election, was requested by the Brookline Educators Union. We assume that attendance will be robust, but would want to know if this is not the expectation. Dr. Connelly and School Committee members provided feedback on last night's forum (was an extremely positive and interesting evening, noted the importance of normalizing this type of conversation and of extending this conversation with others, even if it does not feel as comfortable and safe.)

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ditkoff adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin E. Coyne, Executive Assistant
Brookline School Committee